



CONFLICT TO CO-OPERATION

Who are we

- ▶ IR Change specialises in conflict resolution, mediation and related processes. It is based in Cape Town and has been practicing since 2003.
- ▶ We comprise 20 panelists and 7 community specialists.
- ▶ We also work with a network of associates who have specific expertise in broad range of terrains.

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AVIAN PARK WORCESTER

GANG VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

- ▶ This intervention in gang violence from December 2017 to 15 October 2018. The intervention is divided into two parts:
- ▶ Crisis intervention for the Breede Valley Municipality - 1 December 2017 to 31 January 2018.
- ▶ Facilitating and mediating multi-stakeholder processes with parties involved in, or having impact on, gang violence in Avian Park for the Western Cape Province Department of Community Safety, 15 April to 15 October 2018.

Background

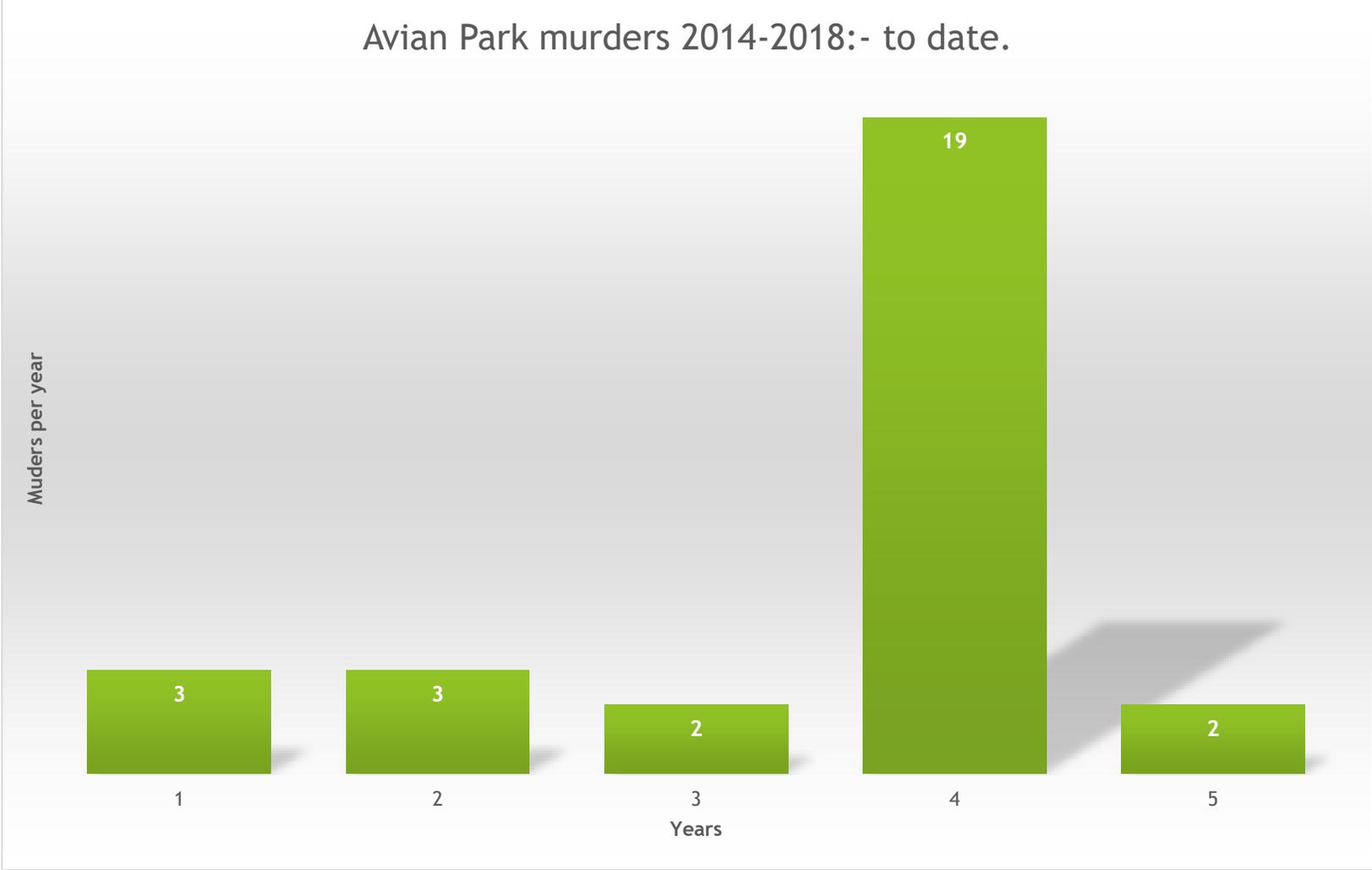
- ▶ Worcester suburb free-market housing, low-income state-funded housing and informal settlement.
- ▶ Population, 15 965 residing in 3 893 homes, about half of Avian Park is affected.
- ▶ Boland towns are dominated by a numbers gang called the Junior Cisco Yakkies (JCY's)
- ▶ Networked into the national numbers (26,27,28) gang system.
- ▶ The JCY's are the dominant gang in Worcester and most of the Boland.
- ▶ Smaller street gangs, the Snake Boys, Criminals and Corner Boys.
- ▶ Gang fights are common in Worcester and often lead to violence in the community.
- ▶ An informal network of citizens (pastors, officials and community leaders) intervene to restore the peace between gangs.



....background

- ▶ Origins of the conflict rooted in the community's response to intolerable predatory gangsterism from the Avian Park JCY's.
- ▶ Youth in the area started opposing the JCY's dominance by taking back control of the streets. At first, stone-throwing fights broke out, inevitably leading to injury and then the use of firearms.
- ▶ The community group was given the name Uitbyters and was outgunned by the JCY's, suffering many more fatalities (3:1) than the JCY's.
- ▶ In the nine months between the start of the "war" and the appointment of mediators, 16 murders were committed. Many homes were damaged and several destroyed.
- ▶ Defined territories emerged, splitting the area into no-go zones for parties.
- ▶ Delivery of government services had ceased except for SAPS, POP saturation.
- ▶ Members of the Uitbyters made zip guns and started acting like gangsters.
- ▶ After many unsuccessful interventions authorities and community alike were panicked, despairing and traumatised.

Avian Park murders 2014-2018:- to date.



Approach

1st Iteration:

- ✓ Crisis intervention, the fielding of a team of experts to quickly establish relationships with the parties to bring them into process.
- ✓ Once in credible process the possibility of ceasing hostilities is more likely and generally attainable.
- ✓ Assemble a skilled and experienced team of mediators.
- ✓ Consideration of language, cultural match and experience in gang environments.
- ✓ Dialogical methods

Approach

2nd Iteration:

- ▶ Continue engagement with the parties
- ▶ Give effect to restorative, developmental and diversionary interventions
- ▶ Support the development of intergovernmental coordination mechanism

Social conflict intervention methodology

Conflicting parties:

- Through dialogical engagement with antagonists in conflict to promote and assist in developing their understanding of their own, and each other's positions. It is through this change and growth of understanding that a person or groups change their position. A change in position provides opportunity to resolve conflict.
- The objective is to enable, promote and support change through facilitated dialogical methods, aimed at conflicting actors so that parties find their own workable solutions.

Social conflict intervention methodology

Disposition:

- ▶ Alternative conflict resolution is best understood as conflict resolution without the use of force, violence and fear, or through and courts. It is the resolution of conflicts through dialogue (exchange of information) between the conflicting actors and parties. Mediators and facilitators have skills in techniques of dialogue and communication like, listening, reframing, mirroring and questioning, together with complimentary personality. Alternative conflict resolution is dependent on actors and parties voluntarily participating. The mediators and facilitators have no authority or official status. Their authority or influence is achieved through being authentic, giving respect, by maintaining a non-judgmental disposition and honoring commitments and persistence.

Social conflict intervention methodology

Adaptability and flexibility:

- ▶ Intervening in community-based conflict is most often undertaken with insufficient knowledge and a poor understanding of the dynamics at play. Where lives are endangered, engagement is through the principle of *being informed through advancing*. Under these circumstances the predictability is low, requiring adaptability and flexibility in one's approach and planning. As with fire, conflict is fluid and dynamic. Being able and committed to quickly exploiting opportunities is crucial.

High-Low lights of the story

- Carefully talking our way through the community to the antagonists, hearing their stories, losses and pain, ducking diversionary demands, community fear, toxic politics, NGO desperation.
- Shuttle mediation parties agree to a ceasefire
- Hidden elements intimidate participation
- Parents play a constructive role
- Six-week break, telephonic monitoring and retaliation prevention
- Back again, traumatic mediations
- Intergovernmental mechanism established
- Operation Thunder arrests leadership, Uitbyters collapse, JCY's go to ground
- Focus shifts to intergovernmental mechanism support and community resilience-building

Observations

- ▶ Community response to gangsterism is a fast-growing phenomena
- ▶ This presents opportunity and threat
- ▶ In Avian Park the opportunity was lost - with disastrous consequences
- ▶ Communities are the key to moderating or resolving gang-related problems
- ▶ Community and civil society efforts to confront gangsterism must be identified early so that experience and expertise can be made available
- ▶ This expertise does not reside in government
- ▶ The expertise comprises social facilitation, community mobilisation and organisational skills
- ▶ That communities are supported and encouraged to engage in lawful confrontation and the disruption gangsterism
- ▶ That these intervention also offer the opportunity for gangsters and gangster families to opt out of being gangsters.

Recommendation 1

- 1.1 In the office of the director general of the province, set up an intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder mechanism
- 1.2 Said mechanism to support or initiate intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder mechanisms at local level dealing with gangsterism, taxi violence and service delivery conflict
- 1.3 The mechanism is resourced, responsive and flexible

Recommendation 2

2.1 That DSC develop a publicity campaign that encourages and guides communities to take collective lawful action against gangsterism and protects such actions.

2.1 Said campaign provides an internet-based platform for information and experience sharing, networking and resource management.

2.3 Said campaign uses advanced data analytics to monitor social media in order to anticipate unfettered community action and to promote constructive dialogue on social media.

Recommendation 3

- 3.1 That government recognises that dialogical-based intervention is a first and preferred response.
- 3.2 That government promotes the use of 3rd party intervention where the community perceives government to be both referee and player.
- 3.3 That government invests in dialogical process expertise within government and secures the resources to initiate 3rd party interventions when required.

This is were we leave the story and it...

Thank you for you indulgence

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